

THE DISTRICT QUARTERLY

Summer 2008

Oconee County Soil and Water Conservation District
301 West South Broad Street, Walhalla, SC 29691 (864) 638-2213
*Commissioners: Alexander P. "Rex" Ramsay, Chairman; Lee Keese, Vice Chairman;
Dorothy Lee, Secretary-Treasurer; Robert C. "Bob" Winchester; L.J. Jones*

DROUGHT ASSISTANCE TO BE AVAILABLE....

The National Office of USDA-FSA has approved the request to implement drought well assistance for livestock (not horses) in Oconee due to the precipitation data submitted for our county. **The signup period for applications will be September 2-19, 2008.** No late applications will be accepted. Please contact Lavelle Marcengill at 638-2213, Extension 100 for details.

IT'S ALMOST THAT TIME!

Be sure to reserve **October 9, 2008** on your calendar! The Soil and Water Conservation District, along with Clemson Extension Service, will host the third annual ***Celebration of Agriculture Banquet***. We will be mailing invitations in the next week or so with more information. This year we will focus on Family Farms. Last year's banquet was a success with an attendance of 137.

We hope to see you this year!



Mr. and Mrs. John Shirley
receiving the Heritage Award from
OSWCD Chairman, Rex Ramsay.

PICTURES FROM THE 2007 CELEBRATION OF AGRICULTURE BANQUET



Carolyn Harris
driving John's antique tractor.

Need Hay?

If you need hay or have hay for sale,
check out the Hay
Exchange on the South
Carolina Department of
Agriculture Website:



www.agriculture.sc.gov

**You can look for local hay to buy or
advertise your own hay for sale.**

Mission Statement

Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District's mission is three-fold:

To provide technical & financial assistance to install conservation practices on private & public lands;
To promote sustainable agriculture; and To educate the public about the wise use of natural resources.

USDA SERVICE CENTER NEWS:

Conservation Programs Protect Soil, Water, and Wildlife
Landowners Encouraged to Apply by September 30th for Prioritized Funding

EQIP helps farmers improve production while protecting environmental quality by addressing such concerns as soil erosion and productivity, grazing management, water quality, animal waste, and forestry concerns. EQIP also assists eligible small-scale farmers who have historically not participated in or ranked high enough to be funded in previous program sign ups. WHIP assists landowners who want to improve wildlife habitat or restore natural ecosystems on their land.

There is a continuous signup for these programs; however, to increase your chances of funding, apply by September 30. Producers interested in applying should visit their local USDA Service Center as soon as possible to prepare their applications.

Visit www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/ for more information, including eligibility information.

FSA Deadlines

Crop Insurance and NAP "Buy-In-Fee" for 2008 Crops.

Sign-up Deadline : **September 16, 2008.**

2008 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Program (DCP)

Sign-up Deadline: **September 30, 2008.**



CAROLINA COASTAL ADVENTURE



Do you have a 9th or 10th grader interested in a career in natural resources? The Oconee Soil and Water Conservation District will sponsor 2 students to attend the Carolina Coastal Adventure held at the Somerset Facility in Moncks Corner October 24-25, 2008.

Students from across the state will visit the Cooper River, canoe in a swamp, ride on an ocean research vessel, trawl the harbor, hear stories around a bonfire and participate in many other fun and exciting activities.

Call Ann Herron at 638-2213, Extension 101 for an application. The deadline for the applications to be returned is September 19, 2008. The District does ask for a \$50.00 deposit to be returned upon completion of attendance at the event. Each student will be responsible for transportation to and from Somerset Facility.

Getting Rid of Privy Hedge *by Carol Klein*

Privet is a great little wildlife plant. Songbirds love the berries, and their evergreen, twiggy growth habit make for good nesting and hiding. The problem is, as you all know, they TAKE OVER. That means there is none of the other kind of mid-story growth to provide for the seeds and berries of other plants that are important for year-round habitat.

We have fought privet for decades on our little place, and it is very gratifying to see the kinds of things that move into the understory after the privet comes out. My favorite is Virginia Creeper that just shows up out of nowhere. Not sure it has much wildlife value, but it's gorgeous color is always nice to see on a walk in the woods in the fall.

We've done everything but aerial treatment to kill privet. We pull arms full of the small seedlings (by the thousands!), slash-bark treatment of the middling ones, and hand-sawing followed by stump treatment of the largest. A group of Carolina wrens gathered around as we cut up a big privet that opened up a big circle around us. I would swear those birds were cursing us as we hauled off the limbs to use as an erosion break.

It does take time for nature to replace and improve on the nesting and berry-picking the birds enjoy with privet. We have started actively replacing them with shrubs and small trees. As we clear out one area of privet, we plant a few fast-growing natives in their place. In moist, semi-shady openings, we've planted elderberry and gooseberry. In the more typical dry areas at the edges of the field, we've planted highbush cranberry, hazelnut, wild azaleas, American crabapple, Washington hawthorn, several native viburnums, redbud and sourwood. Funny, but for some reason, we didn't have any sourwood on our place until we planted them ourselves. We already have American holly, good for evergreen cover as well as the berries. Oh, and blueberries. Lots and lots of blueberries. Maybe the birds will leave some for us.

To buy dozens of one species at a time, many mail-order nurseries have bare-root trees available for little cost, but for only planting one or 2 of a few kinds, they are very difficult to find without spending a lot of money. A great, cheap source is the Arbor Day Foundation. Make a donation and you get free trees to begin with and the little catalogue of trees and shrubs that sell for around \$3.50-\$8.00 each.

NO CHILD LEFT INSIDE

The Conservation District is supporting the No Child Left Inside Coalition. A great way for you and your child to spend time together outside is to visit the many local attractions in Oconee County. Try a visit to the Chauga Narrows!

CHAUGA NARROWS

Description: Fishermen and hikers will equally enjoy the easy, 20 minute path to the Chauga Narrows, because there is both turbulent whitewater and relaxing flat water waiting nearby. The Narrows itself drops about 25 feet during a 200 foot run down a chute seemingly carved from an action movie set. And while merely another example of a Chauga River "waterfall, the Narrows are a worthy destination.

Height: 25 feet over a run of approximately 200 feet

Length of hike: 0.6 mile

Time to Hike: 20 Minutes

Difficulty: Easy

Creek or river: Chauga River

Directions to the falls:

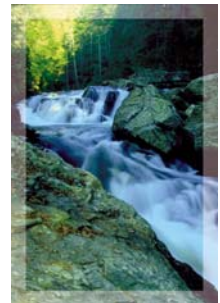
From Walhalla drive west on SC 28 for 6.6 miles and turn left onto Whetstone Road. (Oconee County S-37-193). (Just before the Mountain Top Trading Post).

Drive 3.8 miles to Blackwell Bridge this bridge crosses the Chauga River) and park beyond the bridge.

Hike 0.6 mile downstream to the falls on a faint path that parallels the river.

(Caution: At approximately 0.5 mile the river curves right and dirt path becomes rock. In the wet areas these rocks can be very slippery.)

Source: www.SCTrails.net website.



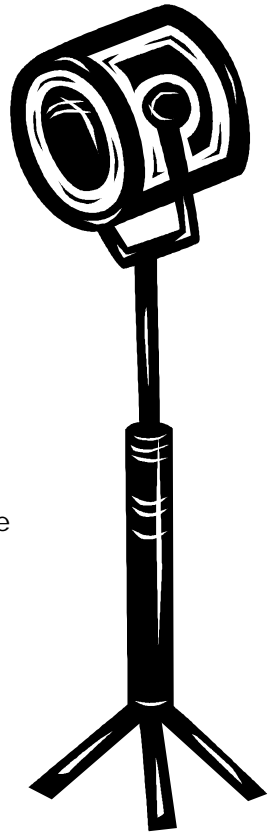
THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON....

Mrs. Edna "Nicki" Harris has been a longtime affiliate member of the Conservation District. During the existence of the Oconee Conservation District Auxiliary, she was an active participant.

Mrs. Harris is an "on the move" lady and involved with many activities that keep her busy. She is an avid reader and enjoys quilting. She is actively involved in work at her church. Mrs. Harris walks every day. She especially enjoys hikes with her family. She recently hiked up Rabun Bald which is a 3 to 4 mile walk up a steep, rocky path! Spending time with her grandchildren completes her busy schedule. The grandchildren love "Nanny" and take her everywhere with them—from the movies to dinner.



Mrs. Harris , second from left on sofa, with her family at the beach this summer.



Mrs. Nicki Harris is truly an amazing lady!

2008 Affiliate Members

Randy Abbott
Alexander's Office Supply
Jack & Virginia Arve
Boggs Spray Service
Charles Cothran
Barney Drake
Tommy & Ann Grant
Lynn Harwell
Martin Kazanjiam
John Little
Floyd & Ann Lee McPhail
Herman Morris
Wayne & Ellen Orr
John Sandifer
Tim Tannery
Bill Watson
Wilbur & Shelby Woolbright

Bank of Westminster
Sammy & Betty Anderson
Blue Ridge Bank
Neville Bryson
Joe & Mandy Davis
Harold Gibson
Mrs. Nicki Harris
Carol & Larry Hendrix
Land Construction Co., Inc.
Lavelle & Tony Marcengill
Neil & Gwen McPhail
Ms. Christine Murphy
Bob & Virginia Owens
Mr. and Mrs. Barker Stone
J. Harold Thomas
Mrs. Billie Welsh
Julian & Ann Yelton

Melissa & Derrill Ables
Jack & Reid Arnold
Blue Ridge Electric Co-op
John Clark
Joel Davis
Mrs. Grace Golden
John & Carolyn Harris
Hoyt Jones
Laws Logging, Inc.
Dwight Martin
Mr. & Mrs. Don Moore
Oconee Federal Savings & Loan
Ed Randall
Mendel & Linda Stone
Joel & Deborah Thrift
Patrick & Sandra Williams

WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT!

All programs and services of the Oconee County Soil & Water Conservation District, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service, and SC Department of Natural Resources Land, Water, and Conservation Division are offered on a non-discriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.